

Facebook pledges \$50M a year to match relief donations

November 29 2017, by Barbara Ortutay



In this Monday, June 19, 2017, file photo, a user gets ready to launch Facebook on an iPhone, in North Andover, Mass. Facebook announced Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2017, that the company is giving disaster-relief organizations such as the Red Cross access to data on what users need and where they are as part of an expansion of tools available for relief and charitable giving. (AP Photo/Elise Amendola, File)

Facebook is pledging \$50 million a year to match disaster-relief

donations, part of a bevy of tools and efforts around charitable causes the social media giant announced on Wednesday.

The pledge isn't all new money, but represents an effort to formalize matches Facebook has already been making on an ad-hoc basis. For example, it matched user donations up to \$1 million for Hurricane Harvey relief earlier this year. The company says it has not yet determined how it will distribute the money.

Facebook also said it will give relief organizations such as the Red Cross access to data on what users need and where they are during a disaster.

While Facebook users can already see individual pleas and offers for help, relief groups will get a broader set of aggregated, organized data similar to what Facebook sees. That includes real-time maps showing where people need help, whether that's water, shelter or baby supplies.

"Sometimes there are hundreds of thousands of posts and it's really hard to scroll through all of them," said Naomi Gleit, Facebook's vice president of social good.

The company announced the new features during its Social Good Forum in New York, a gathering for nonprofits and individuals using the site to help with various causes.

Facebook is also launching a mentorship program that pairs people from nonprofits with people who need support. CEO Mark Zuckerberg said that while Facebook is typically "connecting you with people you may know," the program is meant to help connect you "with people you should know."

Facebook is also expanding its fundraising tools beyond the U.S. and eliminating the fees it had been charging for people using its service to

raise money for various causes.

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